

in my congressional district. His influence on the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA) and on our entire national park system was immense, and will last far into the future.

Brian O'Neill was born in 1941 in Washington D.C. and grew up there. In high school he teamed up with his mother, Virginia and his twin brother, Alan, to found a nonprofit organization to expose urban children to the wonders of national parks. After graduating from the University of Maryland, he joined what was then the Bureau of Outdoor Education, and worked on park planning. The Bureau's name was changed to Heritage Recreation and Conservation Service and later was merged into the National Park Service. In the early 70's, Brian had the opportunity to pitch the idea of urban national parks to President Nixon, who became an enthusiastic backer, and signed legislation creating the GGNRA in 1972. Nine years later Brian became Assistant Superintendent of the park and in 1986, he became its Superintendent.

When Brian first hiked through the GGNRA's fragrant headlands in his green uniform and flat brimmed hat, the park was a beautiful, but in many cases, crumbling collection of former military installations looking out on the broad Pacific and busy San Francisco Bay. Yet these places were steeped in history and brimming with potential. What it took to bring it all together was a passion for parks, a commitment to solid planning and the personal skills to create partnerships—all attributes of Brian O'Neill.

During Brian's tenure he strengthened and expanded the non-profit partnerships at Fort Mason, Fort Baker, the Presidio and the Mann Headlands. Where else could you visit a national park and see such well regarded and varied institutions as the Magic Theatre and Antenna Theatre, the Discovery Museum, the Marine Mammal Center and the headquarters of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary? Where else could you hike through the magnificent redwood cathedral of Muir Woods and the same day hear an internationally known economist lecture at Cavallo Point?

The GGNRA under the leadership of Brian O'Neill became a place to enjoy nature and to learn about nature; a place to renew your spirit and expand your potential; a place to encounter the Bay Area's history and to prepare for its future. It was, and is now, a place for hikers, cyclists, equestrians, dog walkers, artists, educators, environmentalists, wind surfers, college kids and city kids, tourists from near and afar, and ordinary folks, taking just a few minutes to leave the city's bustle, enter the park's natural splendor and get away from it all.

It would be simplistic to say that the Golden Gate Recreational Area became everything to all people because, of course, it can't. Despite its urban interface, it is a national park, and the mission to preserve and protect its natural and cultural resources is always in tension with human uses. Brian's not always so fun job was to find ways to resolve these kinds of conflicts. For this job, he had an affability that diffused conflict, an encyclopedic knowledge of Park Service policies and regulations, and a crafty and creative mind. He never seemed to back down, but he found ways to churn out solutions to the most difficult and complex problems.

The Fort Baker Retreat and Conference Center is a case in point. At first it was to be a rather large public-private endeavor, but that disturbed residents and the City of Sausalito, who asked for my help. The Secretary of Interior intervened, more than a year of negotiation ensued, and the City of Sausalito eventually sued unsuccessfully to halt the project. Brian O'Neill listened and piece by piece he put together a new planning process that resulted in the project's downsizing, the selection of a local developer, new public meetings, and a campus that utilizes green building materials, solar energy, and transportation management.

Fort Baker is now the pride of the Park Service and Sausalito, and it couldn't have turned out so well without the persistence and varied skills of Brian O'Neill. What could have become a political quagmire became instead, Brian O'Neill's triumph.

Madam Speaker, there are a lot of people who are going to miss Brian O'Neill, his big smile, his twinkling blue eyes and his obvious enjoyment of his job. My consolations especially go to his wife Marti, his mother, Virginia, his twin brother Alan, and his two adult children, Kim and Brent. They have so much to be proud of. Brian O'Neill has left us a rich legacy in a park that is as wonderfully expansive as the man himself.

Brian O'Neill was an institution, but also a warm, caring human being, a friend . . . and a great dancer.

CONGRATULATING TAIWAN ON ITS PARTICIPATION AS AN OBSERVER IN THE 62ND WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, as the 62nd World Health Assembly convenes in Geneva this week, I rise to congratulate Taiwan's participation as an observer. This occasion is a significant milestone for Taiwan because it marks the first time since withdrawing from the United Nations 38 years ago that Taiwan is rejoining a United Nations-related body as an observer.

I have been a longtime supporter of Taiwan's meaningful participation in the World Health Organization. The outbreaks of SARS, avian influenza, and most recently, the H1N1 flu, have made it clear that public health problems know no borders. With the great potential for the spread of infectious diseases across countries and continents, it is critical that all parts of the world, including Taiwan, be given the opportunity to participate in international health cooperation forums and programs.

In 2004, Congress demonstrated unequivocal support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization by enacting Public Law 108-235, which authorized the secretary of state to initiate and implement a plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual World Health Assembly. I applaud this year's decision to finally grant Taiwan a seat at the table of this critical global health forum. May this occasion mark the beginning of Taiwan's growing involvement in other international organizations.

BEST WISHES TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I rise to present my best wishes to Dr. James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, as he celebrates his 80th birthday on June 1. He is a friend and an exceptional steward of the Library of Congress.

The Library, a priceless although perhaps underappreciated resource, has evolved into so much more than a Congressional collection. It is truly the nation's library, containing a diverse multi-media collection of 140 million items on more than 600 miles of shelves.

It is our good fortune that this institution has been wisely directed since 1987 by James Billington, a scholar and an outstanding public servant. During his tenure, Dr. Billington has expanded the Library's collection to include not just hardcopy works, but digital and interactive material as well. Dr. Billington has displayed a commitment to public access and engagement by sharing the Library's priceless collections widely and also delving more deeply to generate knowledge and distill wisdom. I look forward to the continued development of innovative programs such as the National Digital Library and now the World Digital Library, and the annual National Book Festival on the Mall. In his inaugural address as Librarian he said, "This place has a destiny to be a living encyclopedia of democracy, not just a mausoleum of culture, but a catalyst for civilization."

I take great inspiration from the Library's art and architecture, and also in knowing that the Library of Congress is here for all. We've formed the bipartisan Congressional Library of Congress Caucus to promote this world class resource and to show appreciation for the Library, its collections, curators, and Librarian.

Thanks to Dr. Billington's vision and efforts the Library of Congress is now a must-see destination for visitors in Washington. I greatly appreciate his efforts and leadership of this esteemed institution, and wish him the best.

THE END OF THE LONG MARCH

HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. BILBRAY. Madam Speaker, on this Memorial Weekend, when we remember the sacrifices of the men and women who fought for our freedom and democracy, I would like to call my colleagues' attention to a powerful essay that appeared in the Japan Times last month. It was written by one of my constituents, Dr. Lester Tenney who is a survivor of the Battle of the Philippines, the Bataan Death March, a "Hell Ship," and a Mitsui coal mine. He recalls that at his first prison camp, the Japanese commandant turned to the American prisoners of war (POWs) and told them that they were "lower than dogs" and "they (the Japanese) would treat us that way for the rest of our lives." Then he said, "We will never be friends with the piggy Americans."